A Study on Social Media Literacy and Cybercrimes against Youth in Kumaon and Garhwal Regions of Uttarakhand

SYNOPSIS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The great Philosopher Aristotle said, **"Human beings are social animals and therefore they naturally seek the companionship of others for survival."**

In today's 'Digital Era' where the United Nations has declared access to internet as a basic human right, people look for companionship on various social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube rather than in their physical surroundings. The common words of today's generation are Just What's app! Follow on Twitter! Check Facebook status! and in the period of Information and Communication Technologies anybody who does not know these words is thought as illiterate or out-of-date **(Bala 2014)**. The children, born since late 1990s grew in a world that relies on technology as an essential part of their lives and that life without networking is no longer imaginable.

Social media refers to media that enable users to interact, create, share, access and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. GeoCities was the earliest social networking service launched in the year 1994 further followed by Classmates.com in 1995, and then in the 1997 'SixDegrees.com' was founded by Andrew Weinreich. Then Open Diary was started in 1998, LiveJournal1999, Ryze 2001, Friendster, LinkedIn, and Myspace 2003, Orkut, Facebook, and Flickr 2004, YouTube 2005, Twitter 2006, Tumblr 2007, WhatsApp launched in 2009, Instagram in 2010 and Google+ in 2011. **(Source: Wikipedia)**. Social Media has turned the entire world into a global village where people are interacting freely without any boundary of time and space. Over the past few years, a rapid progression in the popularity of social media platforms has been observed and these platforms have become an indispensable part of one's life.

Social Media at the present times is not merely a tool for exchanging messages but it is a major means for dissemination of information, interaction, and global participation. As people came under the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic and world went digital the number of internet users along with social media users increased. It was observed during this time, that social media platforms were increasingly used to collect/disseminate information and to express oneself. Social Media is based on internet and users use social media via smartphones, tablets, laptops, or computers. Initially, the use of social media by people was only for interacting with family and friends but with passing time educational institutions, businesses and governments are also

using social media to mark their visibility and to reach out to their target customers. The most unique feature of social media is its ability to connect and share information with anyone in the world at any time. On the internet, the massive growth of Social Networking Sites (SNSs) has created a platform that appeals to millions of Internet users around the world, especially young people **(Wilson, Fornasier, White 2011)**.

Recently, while announcing New Social Media Rules, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad revealed that WhatsApp has over 53 crores users, YouTube 44.8 crores, Facebook 41 crores and Instagram 21 crores users in India. The growing number of users also led to increase in the ad spend on digital platforms. India has the second highest number of social media users in the world and at present there are more than 250 million users of social networking sites according to, **Social Media for Youth and Civic Engagement in India Report, 2019**. In India due to the growing penetration of internet and smartphones social media has become a fast-growing phenomenon. The rapid development of mobile technology has shaped most aspects of our daily life through new media **(Lee, Chen, and Lin 2015)**. In the same report it has also been found that, many users in India are using their smartphones for accessing the social media sites and Millennials are the most active on social media. However, on one side the users of social media are growing but, on another side, according the 'Social Media in India 2019' report by UNDP, social media in India has a large social divide. The usage of social media is dominated by youth who resides in urban areas in India and issues of gender disparity in usage of social media has been reported.

It was also stated in the report that top 50 cities in India that constitute 15% of India's population have 50% of Facebook users. Another article published in **'Financial Express website'** states that, India's digital divide remains large as more than 400 million people have no access to the internet. This article also highlights that digital gender gap is also large in India as fewer women have access to cell phones and internet services.

The impact of social media on the youth of India is a mixed baggage of positives and negatives. The youth spend more than 27 hours a week on social media platforms **(Sachdeva and Tripathi 2019)**. With 2.3 billion users, Facebook is the most famous social media platform throughout the world **(ourworldindata.org)**. Social media like Facebook permeate all areas of society, especially among young people (**Duggan & Smith 2013; Correa, 2016**). In fact, they grew up more familiar with new technologies, so they are called 'digital natives' (**Prensky, 2001; Correa, 2016**) or the Net generation (**Tapscott, 1998; Correa, 2016**). Further, for

gaining access to any social networking sites, one needs to first create an account which requires users to give out their personal information like e-mail id, contact numbers, address, photo etc. which has offered the attackers an easy way to access a user's personal information. With this revelation, loss of privacy, presence of fake news and problem of cyber bullying, unreliable identities and false information, profile squatting through identity theft and stalking are now reported on social media sites.

Social media are often considered, by users, as private space, while in fact, they are not. The invention of social media allows personal activities to become public. Facebook becomes the means to get acquainted with the victims before luring them for physical harms. The sharing of huge information by users about themselves on these networking sites have also offered the attackers to create a digital dossier of user's personal information and produce number of threats to the user. More Indian have been victims of identity theft in the past 12 months and most have privacy concerns **(The Hindu)**. However, another article published in **Business Standard** said that around two-thirds (66 per cent) of Indian adults s are more concerned than ever about being victims of and that more than two in five Indian consumers (45 per cent) experienced identity theft.

Despite the access and massive use of media, youth do not always have the literacy skills that can help them to successfully analyze, understand and evaluate information and make right decisions about its uses. As the influence of the internet and the social web continues to grow, it is important to fill this gap **(Rowlands et al., 2008)**. Proper understanding of how to decode, analyze and evaluate a particular message is must by the user to safeguard oneself from these threats. Proper acquaintance of Media literacy among youth can prevent, reduce cybercrime rate as well as protect individuals from risks and enabled them to effectively exercise their citizenry. It also helps people in managing content and communication and protect themselves from the possible risks related with these services.

Uttarakhand is the 27th state of the Republic India. The state was founded in 2000 after it separated from the large state of Uttar Pradesh. Earlier the state was named as Uttaranchal however, in the year 2006 the state was renamed as Uttarakhand. According to the 2011Indian census, Uttarakhand had a population of 10,086,292, making it the 20th most populous state in India. The State is divided into two regions Garhwal and Kumaon, the Garhwal region consists of the districts Dehradun, Haridwar, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Pauri Garhwal and

Rudraprayag. The Kumaon consist of the districts Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nanital, Pithoragarh and Udham Singh Nagar districts.

Though Uttarakhand is a safe state compared to other states but there has been a marked rise in the cases of cybercrime since 2016. Most cybercrime cases registered are related to cyber bullying and cyber fraud. As the reach of internet services is increasing the problem of cybercrime is also increasing. To tackle to problem, the government of Uttarakhand has also created a separate cell in the state police to deal exclusively with cybercrimes. The state government here has also started an awareness campaign to educate school and college children and prevent them from falling in the prey of cybercrimes.

1.1 Meaning of Social Media:

According to Oxford Definition, "Social Media as a website and an application allows users to create and share the content of news or articles, or also to participate in social networking. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram are examples of social media."

Social Media also refers to computer-based technology that facilitates sharing of ideas, information, thoughts, personal information through building virtual networks and communities. If understood in simple terms everything that can be accessed through internet and further can be used as a medium for dissemination of information, ideas, and opinions can be considered as social media. For using these social networking sites, one does not need any special skills.

Kamalakannan (2019) said social media refers to online platforms that people use for sharing content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, and viewpoints. These platforms and tools help in facilitate online chats and interactions between different groups of people. Social media serves as a platform to express your opinion.

Daneels, R., & Vanwynsberghe, H. (2017) as a part of digital media, social media can be defined on the basis of few characteristics such as: (1) Communication via social media is offers users to choose their own communication channels, (2) the receiver becomes the sender and (3) communication via social media is interactive and happens via networks (**Bechmann & Lomborg, 2013**).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) conducted a study to clarify the meaning of the term social media and how it differs from the visible interchangeable related concepts of web. 2.0 and User Generated Content.

Social networking sites, as just one type of social media, having three aspects according to **Boyd & Ellison (2008).** First, people create a public profile stating information such as age, location, and interests. Second, social networking sites generate a list of other users with whom they share a relationship often referred to as ‘Friends’ or ‘Followers’. Third, these lists are visible and are used to connect with other users.

1.2 Research Problem

Social media at present has become an inseparable part of our daily lives and with each passing day more and more users are accessing this platform for communicating, networking, and exchanging information. India is also the world's second-largest internet market after China (Statista). Currently, India has approximately 504 million active internet users with 433 million users from the age group of 12 years above, as per the report of Internet and Mobile Association of India. **(IAMAI)**. More than 250 + million users are using social networking sites - Social Media for Youth and Civic Engagement in India Report, 2019. Recently, a report published by **datareportal.com** the number of social media users in India increased by 21% between 2020-21. However, Mr. Ajit Mohan, Facebook India's head in a talk stated that only 35% of women have access to the internet in India. Also, according to Internet and Mobile Association of India, male users of internet account to 67% whereas, women account only for 29%.

In addition, **Iqbal and Beigh 2017,** in their study said, the increased dependence on internet in India is presently accompanied by vulnerabilities of societies to cybercrimes. The National Crime Record Bureau **(NCRB)** report reveals that Digital India may have become a soft target for cyber criminals as there is a huge increase of 63.5 % cybercrime cases in India. A report in **Business Standard** likewise reflects massive misuse of Social Media platforms in India. The Chief of National Investigation Agency **(NIA**), Mr. Alok Mittal too said, that every sixth cybercrime in India is committed through social media. Cyber violence is ubiquitous within social media technologies, like Twitter and Facebook **(Nagle, 2018)**.

The NCRB report also highlights that most cybercrime cases in India are reported against women and Youth and they are one of the most vulnerable groups. After an extensive review of literature, the following aspects need to be discussed further: Perception of Youth about Social Media Literacy, Social Media Literacy Level of Youth, Awareness Level of Youth about cybercrimes on Social Media, Types of cybercrimes committed against Youth, and the Role of Social Media Literacy in Limiting Cybercrimes.

This study will be conducted in the state of Uttarakhand as in the last few years several cases of cybercrimes have been reported in the state and according to a report published in **Times of India website**, 100% rise in cybercrimes was observed in Uttarakhand in the year 2017. Recently, another report published on the same website states that during pandemic around 2860 complaints and almost 350 FIRs have been filed in cases related to cybercrimes in Uttarakhand. It is further anticipated that if the current trend continues then by the end of 2021

Uttarakhand will witness more than 6800 cases of cybercrimes. To handle the growing menace of cybercrimes the Government of Uttarakhand is promoting safe cyber practices through various programs among youth and women. Moreover, several Cyber Police Stations have been opened in the state of Uttarakhand where cyber victims can file their complains. Therefore, this study will help in analysing the Social Media literacy level of Youth and understand how aware and prepared they are for protecting themselves on the social media against cybercrimes.

1.3 Research Questions

Keeping the above research problems in mind, the research study has specified the following questions to find the required answers.

1. What is the perception of Youth in Uttarakhand about Social Media Literacy?
2. What is the Social Media Literacy Level of youth in Uttarakhand?
3. How aware are the Youth in Uttarakhand about Cybercrimes on Social Media?
4. What type of Cybercrimes are committed against Youth in Uttarakhand on Social Media?
5. How Social Media Literacy can protect Youth against Cybercrimes on Social Media?

1.4 Importance and need of the study

Today the presence of internet has completely transformed the world into a global village. The growing number of internet users clearly indicate that people are now becoming 'Digital Natives' and with each passing year a sharp rise is observed in the number of people using internet and social media. The Government of India is also working towards providing high-speed internet services to people residing in any part of the country and making them digitally empowered. To achieve this government had also launched its '**Digital India Flagship Programme'** in the year 2015.

The major challenge today faced on the social space is of cybercrimes which are increasing each day. Social Media Platforms and the Cybercrime Economy report by Bromium states, social media platforms have created attractive opportunities for cybercriminals for generating revenue within the clear web. The large userbase and the level of trust on the part of social media users are also facilitating dissemination of malware that can impact both individuals and organizations.

A report from Symantec, a security solutions provider, ranked India second among the nations that were most targeted for cybercrimes through the social media in 2014, after the US. Another article in varindia.com state that cybercrimes are not properly recorded in India due to reasons like lack of awareness among the cops and digitally naive parents and their children.

However, in this technological era, our lives have become more complicated, and these new online environments demand specific literacy skills from their users which are not only limited to reading and writing ability. The users today should possess cognitive and technical competencies to fully control their online presence and make use of the opportunities offered to them on social media platforms while also facing the challenges.

In their study **(Nandedkar & Kumar, 2019)** stated that new forms of literacies help the youth today to filter impurity from the messages and understand the real purpose of the message. It is like an armor to protect viewers from purposive messages trying to create misperception or attitude towards the matter or subject. Hence, Social Media Literacy will contribute to effective usage of various social media platforms such as, social networking sites, image sharing sites or video sharing sites etc. Also, social media literacy will enhance the skills of the youth and they will be able to develop critical thinking skills and combat with the challenge of cybercrimes on social media. Therefore, the study will help in understanding the Social Media

Literacy Level and Cybercrimes Awareness among the youth in in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand.

1.5 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the research study is to analyze the Perception of Youth about Social Media Literacy, Examine their Social Media Literacy Level along with their awareness about Cybercrimes on Social Media. Also, the study will examine the role of Social Media Literacy in preventing Cybercrimes.

Research Objectives of the Study

1. To study the perception of Youth about Social Media Literacy in Uttarakhand.
2. To examine the Social Media Literacy Level of Youth in Uttarakhand.
3. To evaluate the awareness Level of Youth about cybercrimes on Social Media in Uttarakhand.
4. To analyse the different types of cybercrimes against Youth on Social Media in Uttarakhand.
5. To analyze the role of Social Media Literacy in prevention of Cybercrimes on Social Media.

1.6 Hypotheses

Based on the identified objectives and research questions, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H_0 1: There is no significant difference in the awareness level of Youth about cybercrimes on Social Media in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand

H_1 1: There is a significant difference in the awareness level of Youth about cybercrimes on Social Media in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand

H_0 2: There is no significant difference in the Social Media Literacy Level of Youth in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand

H_1 2: There is a significant difference in the Social Media Literacy Level of Youth in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand

H_0 3: There is no significant relationship between Social Media Literacy and Cybercrimes.

H_1 3: There is a significant relationship between Social Media Literacy and Cybercrimes.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

2.1 Meaning of Social Media

Bansal, 2015 in her study titled 'Impact of Social Media on Rural India' states that the definition of social media has changed over a period, has broadened, and explained by many scholars through various perspectives.

Techtarget.com defines social media as, a collective term used for websites and applications which majorly focus on communication, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. Public forums, microblogging site like Twitter, social networking like Facebook, wikis among others are different types of social media.

Manning (2014) defines social media as a new form of media which involves interactive participation. Social Media platforms allow the feasibility of participation and interaction.

Investopedia defines social media as computer-based technology that helps sharing of ideas, feelings, and information via the creation of virtual networks and communities. Social Media features user generated content and offers personalized profiles.

Patwari (2020) defines social media as a medium that gives users an opportunity to interact personally and informally. This medium provides users with the space where they can create, share, access and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media includes social networking sites, blogs, micro blogging sites, online forums, discussion forums and groups.

Hajli (2014) says any website that permits social interaction is considered as a social media site, social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter; gaming sites and video sites such as YouTube; and blogs.

Sharma, Baglari, Marimuthu and Palaniappan (2020) says**,** social media is primarily used for sharing various aspects of life, including sharing of experiences/ facts/ videos and other information.

2.2 Use of Social Media

The far-reaching expansion of social media and internet has significantly influenced many facets of human life **(Ahn, 2013)**

The most popular applications for social networking forums are WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc. (**Almadhoor, 2021**).

(Ahn, 2013) says, today's learner does not just read or consume content. They create information in countless channels and formats, such as status updates on Facebook, tweets on the Twitter platform, videos on YouTube, or personal blog posts. **Livingstone, (2014)** say in his article Developing social media literacy: How children learn to interpret risky chances on social network sites children through social media interact with wider social world.

Kalorth, Verma and Sagar (2020), in their study, 'Information and User: Social Media Literacy in Digital Societies' states, the movement from traditional media of communication to social media permits users to gratify their daily need of information. The information about oneself, and societies are shaped, curated, and disseminated through such networks.

The wide adoption of social networking sites motivates students to use them for entertainment, make and chat with friends, share photos and videos, publish events and events in real-time **Lawal and Cavus 2018).**

People use social media for reaching out to wider communities, sharing of knowledge, engaging in continued medial education, connecting with colleagues and benchmarking and branding says **(Panahi, Watson and Partridge, 2014).**

Vaidya and Vaidya 2020, in their study states that the primary reason behind using social media is to keep in touch friends and family. It was concluded in their research that only a few students are using social media for promoting ideas and sharing information. Social media offered a platform for youth to build social networks or social relations among people **(Singh, Amiri and Sabbarwal, 2017).**

However, **Radhakrishnan, Sriram and Manivannan (2020),** in their study 'Usage of Social Networking Tools by Rural Youth in Transfer of Technology' states that social media is a significant tool used by youth to create, innovate, diffuse, share, exchange their perceptions, intuitions and attitudes with virtual communities.

(Sunith, 2020) in his study 'Use and Misuse of Social Media among Indian Youth' stated that there seems to be a lack of understanding on the proper use of social media and penetration of

internet and smart phones has further perplexed the situation. Therefore, there is an urgent need to organize media literacy drives in schools and other educational institutions.

2.3. Problem of Social and Digital Divide in India

(Norris 2001; AHN 2011) defines the digital divide as 'unequal access to and participation in new technologies.' Youth who are systematically excluded from social networks can also miss chances to develop technical skills, social interactions, and relationship networks. Researchers typically examine the digital divide based on components such as gender, race, or socio-economic status **(AHN 2011).**

The term digital divide is loosely used to describe the breaks in access to technology within a population **(Norris, 2001).**

Due to lack of proper infrastructure, low rate if literacy, language technological skills are some major factors contributing towards digital divide in India **(Bhat, 2020).**

(Augustine and Yadav, 2021) says that the concept of the digital divide does not exist where literacy is high, the rural/ urban gap is very narrow or almost nil in terms of digital literacy among educated youth in Kerala.

India is a multilateral, multilingual and multi-religious society with many subdivisions based on region, ethnic groups, class, and caste. The digital divide and gender are another part of this diversity **(Pande, 2008)**.

Every student does not have the same access or experience within social media. **(Nagale, 2018) (Kimmons, 2014)** talked about participation gap and stated that not everyone had the opportunity, knowledge, or understanding of how social media can be used effectively.

Patwari 2020 in his study 'Use of Social Media by Rural Youth in India: A Boon or a Bane' said that the over utilization of social media is increasing at an disturbing rate and further resulting in addiction among the Indian youth and has become a serious concern. Moreover, the over utilization of social media is mostly growing among the rural youth aged between 16 to 25 years.

2. 4 Social Media and Problem of Addiction

Being online is viewed as safer than roaming the streets, and parents often assume using technology in the home is normal and healthy **(Griffiths and Kuss, 2017**). So, with all the

good things coming to the way there are also various threats associated with these networking sites. Dependency of youth on social media is now leading to addiction. About 2/3 of youth feels they are addicted to social media states UNDP report 2019.

(**Singh, Amiri and Sabbarwal, 2017)** in their study states, over utilization of social media, refrain from participating in real life activities, young people live mostly in the virtual than in real life.

Bala 2014, in her study 'Social Media and Changing Communication Patterns' in an Age of Over Communication social media create a new kind of social order, strengthen the social network, but it weakens interpersonal relationships and on the other hand build alienation.

Recent research has also confirmed that sharing of information on social media increases life satisfaction and loneliness for adults, however, the opposite was true for older adults (**Griffiths and Kuss, 2017; Teo and Lee, 2016**). Younger generation is more at risk of developing addiction symptoms because of their SNS use (**Griffiths and Kuss, 2017**).

2.5 Social Networking Sites

The Oxford Dictionary defines a social network as "A dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc." A Social Networking Website may be in a variety of forms such as a forum, chat room, blogs etc. through which people communicate, exchange ideas and multimedia such as pictures, videos, and audios.

Anderson and Jiang (2018) conducted a study on teens, social media, and technology where they found YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat most popular platforms among American teens. The study also highlighted that now there is no consensus between teens about the effect that Social Media has on the lives of young people at present.

A study by **Bhati and Bansal (2019)** concluded that the usage of internet by youth is now heavily shifted to Social Media Sites. Along with positive outcomes social media is affecting the lifestyle of youth and addiction to social media resulted in increased health problems and change in behaviour**.**

Yildiz defines social network as the virtual space where users interact with people from different cultures, express their emotions and thoughts through symbols representing certain gestures and facial expressions used in day-to-day life.

2.6 Impact of Social Networking Sites

Barman (2015), Social Networking websites are used as a means for communication and interaction among people across the globe, be it reuniting with old ones or meeting new people.

A study conducted by **(Khurana N, 2015)** to explore the positive and negative impacts of Social Networking Sites (SNS) on youth reveals that SNS have both negative and positive impacts. The study emphasizes that today's youngsters are not only tech savvy but also have social consciousness.

A study conducted by **(Das and Sahoo, 2011)** reveals that social networking sites significantly change the social and personal behaviour of the users. **Manjunatha (2013)** by using survey method conducted a study to understand social networking sites (SNS) usage patterns among college students in India. The result of the study showed that the usage of SNS among Indian college students has increased significantly and has far reaching effects on the academic and other activities of the students. The study also concludes that the students were aware of the significant risks associated with these websites.

Das and Sahoo (2011) says, SNS becomes a cause of anxiety and addiction. It begins to affect personal relationships with spouses and family members.

(Hetu and Morselli, 2011) notes, however, that many journalists have however published anecdotal evidence of the use of social networks sites by organized criminal groups, mainly to document and coordinate their illegal activities.

Sunith (2020) With jaw dropping number of active users on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, social media is ever expanding and has become a reservoir of information and entertainment that sets no limits. Logging into social media and going through the contents frequently are not advised as one is likely to fall victim to a syndrome known as the "Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)" for which many people have already sought psychological advice.

2.7 Social Networking Sites and Cyber Crimes

The existence of social networking sites and the number of students visiting each of these sites each day poses a serious threat to safety of students, government agencies and corporate organizations and that means huge amounts of data is being accumulated that is being used to commit crimes against our students **Lawal and Cavus (2018).**

Malar (2012) study looks at how girls are affected by cybercrimes in social networking sites and how these crimes affect their social network pattern. The cybercrimes these girls encountered while interacting on social networks has made them more cautious and alert on the internet. There are also so many other girls who have been more severely affected cyber criminals and have suffered severe mental agon. The study's conclusion suggests that knowledge about cybercrime and the ways to escape it should be imparted to girls. There is an urgent need to provide adequate awareness to all the young people who interact through social networks.

Ganesan and Mayilvahanan (2017), advancement in emerging internet technology and its widespread knowledge leads to security issues, cybercrime, internet hackers and intruders. Due to overuse of social networking sites and lack of awareness leads to increase the cybercrimes by several aspects.

Tripathi (2017), social media has become an indispensable part of today's youth. Not only it is a medium to remove boredom or act as a time-filler, but it has also started to have a significant impact on their education, knowledge, and exposure to new experiences. It has become a universal medium of interaction in which almost all young people participate. The Lack of strict cybercrime in containment laws in India has also led to increasing cases of cyberbullying People are unwilling to report the cases of cyberbullying incidents as such crimes are stigmatized.

Kashif, Rehman, Javed, Pandey (2020) In this pandemic time, people are mostly using internet and electronic gadgets to perform their duties which are possible over the internet. The results of the study revealed that people are suffering surge in cybercrimes.

(O'Keeffe & Clarke, 2011) explained the most common activity among the present generation of children and youngster is spending time on social media network sites. Gaming sites, simulated worlds, and video sites such as YouTube and blogs have offered youth a gateway for entertainment and interaction. This has seen an exponential growth in recent years. It has further become important that parents become aware of social media sites, given the fact that are safe for children and adolescents.

The tremendous growth of internet use in world and particularly in India is laterally accompanied by substantial surge in cybercrime and has made India vulnerable to such crimes (**Iqbal and Beigh, 2017**).

Pahuja (2018) focus on nature of cybercrimes, use of social networking for the purpose of committing cybercrime and elementary problems associated with cybercrimes. The study suggested that there is a need to bring changes in the Information Technology Act to make it more effective to combat cybercrime. India should have proper technology to beat the cyber criminals in all aspects.

Kunwar and Sharma (2020), Social networking sites have become a part of our life. Various companies have even discovered that social media can be an effective way to present their customers with existing information. However, on social media multiple cases of violating users' privacy have come into light.

Cyberbullying on social networking sites is an emerging societal challenge related to the undesirable use of technologies **(Chan, Cheung, and Wong, 2019).**

Rajan and Babu (2020) tried to understand the cyber knowledge, attitude, and practice about the personality traits of the college students. The paper highlighted the students' lack of awareness of IT activities. A lack of cybercrime awareness among students was also noted. **Kunwar and Sharma (2020),** the internet with social media has opened new ways of communication in the hyper connected world. However, it is unfortunate to note that social media sites can present a wide variety of serious security risks and threats to users and organizations.

Gangopadhyay and Dhar (2014) social networking sites allows young users with opportunity to socialize with a large network of known as well as unknown people. It is like an addiction for the youth to create online profiles. They certainly are hooked to mobile phones, laptops, and PCs. The World Wide Web and the social networking sites have opened broader avenues of communication. Becoming friends with unknown people and increasing the 'friend list' in social networking sites might be thought as cool and trendy but it poses threat to one's privacy.

Tripathi (2017), Young people today are so involved in their virtual lives that the line between real and reel has become quite thin. Cyberbullying has become a very negative part of these teenagers, social media lives. Real street violence has turned into cybercrime and cyberbullying. Appropriate education and awareness raising campaigns must be organized and promoted in the schools, colleges, and universities.

Karali, Panda, Panda (2015), says that from the last few years India has been facing many cybercrime cases. It is a matter of worry that these cases have a straight negative influence on the economic and social lives of people.

Datta, Panda, Tanwar, Kaushal 2020, The ratio of cyber-crime in India is constantly rising due to various reasons and it is very difficult to trace cyber-criminals.

(Iqbal and Beigh) says the people committing cybercrimes cannot be constrained by geographical limitations as cyberspace is a free-flowing platform and a global problem.

As technology advances around the globe, people should be concerned with the type of information they post on social media and networking sites. Individuals should remain vigilant to secure their personal data online to reduce the risk of being hacked and falling victim criminal activity (**Pavlik, 2017).**

2.8 Cybercrime: Meaning

(Saini 2020) says that the use of internet is appreciated by everyone, but the other side of the coin is that cybercrimes using internet are increasing. **(Karali, Panda, Panda 2015; Saini, Rao, Panda 2021)** states that in the present era of online processing, maximum of the information is online and prone to cyberthreats. We can define cybercrime as any malefactor or other crime involving electronic communications or information systems, including any device or the internet or both.

Sarmah, Sarmah, Baruah, 2017 defines that internet technology has been used by a few people for criminal activities such as unauthorized access to other networks, fraud etc. These criminal activities or the offenses/crimes related to internet are known as cybercrime.

Cybercrime can be defined as the attacks those are processed knowingly and they have serious impact over the society like it can be a threat to National Defence, it can lead to psychological disorder and can even cause economic disruption **(Saini, Rao, Panda 2012).**

Dashora, 2011 defines cybercrime as crimes committed on internet by using a computer. He also states that cybercrime is the current problem, and it is the most complicated problem in the cyber world.

Chaudhary, 2019 Cybercrime is a term for any illegal activity that uses a computer as its primary means of commission. Most of the cybercrimes remain unreported due to the hesitation and shyness of the victim and her fear of defamation of family. There is a need for proper propagation of awareness for the women who are involved in social networking sites. **Reddy (2014),** frequency of cybercrimes has increased over the last decade. Due to advancement of

technology people apply their multiple or multi-label talent to misuse of technology and make it harmful to other point of view.

Arpana and Chauhan, 2012 stated that The Information Technology Act, 2000, has not defined the term 'cybercrime'. However, Cybercrime can commonly be defined as a criminal activity in which information technology systems are used as the means for committing the crime.

Sreehari, Abinanth, Sujith, Unnikuttan and Jayashree, 2018 found that the increased dependency of people on internet has led to the increase in cybercrime. Problems such as lack of proper training and education, the poor understanding of cybercrime among Indians have also contributed to the growth in cybercrime. Respondents spend more than 2 hours on the Internet. Moreover, most of the respondents have no idea about how to secure their information while being online.

Mali, Sodhi, Singh and Bansal, 2018 discovers that internet users are increasingly exposed to security threats while using the internet. In their study, they concluded that cyber-crime poses a threat to society. In the wake of Digital India, there are ample chances that cybercrimes will spread. There is no correlation between familiarity with cybercrime and respondent's age. This means that the awareness programmes on every corner must be communicated through different media. This means that consumers must be aware of their online presence and remain cautious when doing online activities.

Kharat and Kedare (2019), The increased reliance on cyber space has paved way for a rapid growth in cybercrimes. The study also found that most respondents occasionally receive spam messages and spam messages and spam calls, but few of these respondents neglected to report this to the cubercrime police to prevent recurrence.

Avais, Wassan, Narejo and Khan, (2014) It is alarming that ignorance is increasing the rate of E-victimization. E-Victimization is the non-face-to-face type of victimization.

Choudhary (2020) Cybercrime is evolving as a very serious issue in today's scenario. Cyber world becomes forte of everyone, government sector to businessmen, school students to college students and teenagers to adults. The study also reported average cybercrime awareness among the college students.

2.9 Cyber Laws in India

The IT Act 2000 seeks to change outdated laws and provides ways to deal with cybercrimes. However, as technology evolved, many loopholes were identified in the law that led to the adoption of the Information Technology Law (Amendment) 2008, which came into effect on October 27, 2009 **(Karali, Panda and Panda, 2013**).

Sarmah, Sarmah and Baruah, 2017 in their study states that Cyber Law was born to take control of the crimes committed over the internet or the cyberspace or through the uses of computer resources.

Mehta and Singh, 2013; Jamil and Khan, 2011 in their study compared the data protection act in India with European countries and concluded that the Indian cyberlaws are poor and it is important to bring in the appropriate cyberlaws and proper awareness about them. It was also reported in the study that people do not have much awareness about how to protect their data.

Pahuja 2018, in her study stated that there is a need to bring changes in the Information Technology Act to make it more effective to combat cybercrime.

2.10 Changing Notion of Literacy

Literacy is being redefined by the presence of technology in our schools and in our society. Literacy is no longer just the ability to read and write clearly. The definition of literacy has changed over the centuries due to human, cultural, and technological developments.

Smyth (2011) notes that literacy means being able to use a range of technologies to gather information and communicate with others

Social media pose great challenges for users. They involve building and constantly updating a variety of skills, including familiar reading, and writing competencies and new digital skills ranging from very basic to highly advanced. People who use social media need similar skills to manage print, broadcasting, and computers, but what is new here is that social media also includes skills that are necessary to be able to create texts and images.

2.11 Meaning of Social Media Literacy

(Vanwynsberghe, Boudry, & Verdegem, 2015 defines Social Media Literacy as the technical and cognitive competencies that users should have in order use social media effectively and efficiently for social interaction and communication on the web. Technical competencies refer to knowledge and skills that help users to create, navigate, organize, produce, and share content. Cognitive, on the other hand, includes the analysis and evaluation of social media content

(Livingstone, 2004) and relates to the critical understanding of social media content in its context, its relevance, and trustworthiness.

At present young people are growing up in a world which is full of internet access, and instant entertainment and information. The youth may be media-savvy but not essentially digital literate. In addition, several studies have stated that young people lack information and media literacy skills which they require in order to be competent communicators in the current century **(Beach and Baker, 2011)**.

Teenagers' media literacy helps them to overcome the effects of social media **(Atmi, Satibi, Cahyani, 2018; Potter, 2001**).

The topic of social media literacy is still an under-researched area says (**Manca, Bocconi, and Gleason, 2021).** Another study by (**Callens, 2014**) states that even though most students use social media regularly, many do not know how to use it professionally. Social media are the most frequently visited sites on the Internet however, less attention has been paid to the topic of social media literacy **(Syam and Nurrahmi, 2020).**

With the advent of social media, media literacy has become increasingly important skill as it enables users to generate, analyze, rate, and create their own media and more importantly understand and navigate **Kimbrough & Guadagno, (2019)**.

Murawsk, Bühler, Böckle, Pawlowski and Bick, 2019 in their study states that there is a dire need to rethink information literacy compared to traditional and unidirectional media services such as printed newspapers or television. From the context social media, information is characterized as "dynamic", for example, every user could easily modify any piece of information before sharing it.

2.12 Application of Social Media Literacy

Tamplin, McLean, and Paxton (2018), conducted a study to find out how social media literacy can protect against the negative impact of exposure to social media appearance ideal images on young adults' body image and it was concluded that the inclusion of social media literacy in prevention interventions is supported.

Mingoia, Hutchinson, Gleaves and Wilson conducted a pilot study in 2019 to test how social media literacy intervention can improve one's ability to be critical of social media and the

messages. It was found that media literacy education is a new strategy to reduce the harmful effect of social media messages about tanning on skin cancer risk factors.

Probst 2017 conducted a study to investigate the possibility of using social media literacy education as part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to improve the social and emotional learning outcomes of students with disabilities.

McLean, Wertheim, Masters and Paxton, 2017, conducted a study to investigate usefulness of social media literacy intervention for adolescents' girls on risk factors for eating disorders. The outcomes of the study suggested that social media literacy offers prevention of risk for eating disorders in the adolescent girls in the current social media environment of heightened vulnerability."

Ramasamy (2020) conducted a study to evaluate the information literacy skills and social media literacy skills of postgraduate and M. Phill scholars from Arts and Science Colleges affiliated with Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikana. In conclusion researchers suggested that the college libraries should come together with other departments and plan awareness programmes for the students and scholars on the modules of social media literacy. As this will help the students to become an dynamic and careful user.

Rahmawati, Yogi, Dyah, Siti, 2013 says that with training the level of cyberbullying knowledge increases, the intention of cyberbullying reduces.

Briandana and Dwityas (2019) states that Media literacy is important for young people, as they critically analyze access to media messages and create messages using media.

The language, structure, and disclosures in social media groups (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and sub-groups (Facebook group, Facebook pages, etc.) are the most important variables for understanding the concept of social media literacy. Social media literacy is less talked about and needs to be articulated along with the digital literacy. The social media literacy programs and initiatives should focus on micro-level of society rather than just overall digital societies states **Kalorth, Verma and Sagar (2020).**

2.13 Theoretical Framework

The Knowledge Gap Theory was first proposed by Phillip J. Tichenor, George Donohue and Clarice Olien of Minnesota University in the year 1970 in their article **'Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge'** (Tichenor et al., 1970: 161). This theory states that with

each new medium the gap between information rich and information poor increases. The richer and more educated people obtain information from mass media faster than lower social economic classes. The rich have better access to media and can they can benefit from it. Therefore, as mass media grows the knowledge gap also increases between the higher and the lower social classes.

Knowledge gain is a critical form of social inclusion associated with differential media use which is applied to both new media and old media. The knowledge gap hypothesis is mostly stated in the public discussion as the social consequences of the Information Society. This theory speaks against the famous belief that diffusion of information by media will spread among one and all and will result in an informed public.

2.12 Research Gap

Based on the extensive review of literature a significant research gap has been identified. Review of literature suggest that there are several research studies available on the topic of Social Media. But they are majorly focusing on the role social media in communication; impact of social media on youth; use of social media in politics; predicting future of social media; teens, social media, and technology, Use of social media in Business etc.

However, even with extensive review of literature, the researcher has only been able to find limited literature which delves into understanding Youths' perception of Social Media Literacy, Types of Cybercrimes committed against them, and their awareness about Cybercrimes on Social Media. No such data is available which pertains to the sample: Youth in Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand and their Social Media Literacy level and Cybercrime awareness, types of cybercrimes committed against youth and the role of Social Media Literacy in preventing Cybercrimes.

Therefore, the study will be conducted to bridge the identified research gap identified.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The present study will adopt an exploratory cum descriptive research design. The research design will be used to specify the overall research plan, structure, methods, and procedures for collecting and analysing the data for fulfilling the requirements of the research objectives and completing the study successfully.

3.2. Research Method

To carry out this research study, a mixed method approach will be used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used for data collection.

3.3. Data Collection Tools

To fulfil the need of research objectives, the **primary data as well as secondary data** will be used for this research study.

Primary Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire and personal in-depth interviews by the researcher. The qualitative data in this study will be obtained through in-depth interviews of experts from the field of social media and cyber security. The quantitative data will be obtained by a means of a survey the sample selected for the study.

Secondary data will be collected from various sources such as books, academic journals, magazines, newspapers, research studies, government publications, official reports, online libraries, Organizational/ Institutional websites, etc.

3.4 Sample Design & Sampling Procedures

Youth from the Kumaon and Garhwal regions of Uttarakhand will be considered as the population for this research study. According to the Indian National Youth Policy (2014), Youth are defined as those aged 15 to 29. United Nations Population Fund **(UNPF)** projects that, India will continue to have one of the youngest populations in the world till 2030. Youth are the future and builder of a nation; they are also the change agent for the larger world and the most active group of people using social media, so it becomes imperative to examine their Social Media Literacy level and awareness of cybercrimes happening on social media.

3.4.1 Sample Size

Sample size for qualitative study: 10

A total of 10 experts from the field of social media and cyber security will selected for the study.

Sample size for quantitative study: -

The sample size will be selected based on the conceptual framework of the study.

3.4.2 Sampling Method

For, this research study, Purposive Sampling will be used for the selection of districts from the two regions of Uttarakhand. Convenience Sampling will be used to select the respondents for the quantitative study. Purposive Sampling will be used to select the experts from the Field social media and Cyber Security.

3.4.3 Data Analysis

For the Qualitative research, the data collected from the in-depth interviews of experts will be transcribed and analysed. For Quantitative research, the data will be collected using questionnaires and the data will be tested using statistical tools like SPSS 26.0.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

Following are the limitations of the study:

1. The present study will be limited to the state of Uttarakhand.

2. The study will be confined only to youth.

3. Being an individual research study and due to constraints in terms of time, money and resources, the study will employ a limited sample.

4. TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME

The research study will comprise the following chapters:

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Review of Literature

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

Chapter 4. Data Analysis

Chapter 5. Findings & Discussion

Chapter 6. Conclusion, Recommendation and Future Scope

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Appendix

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